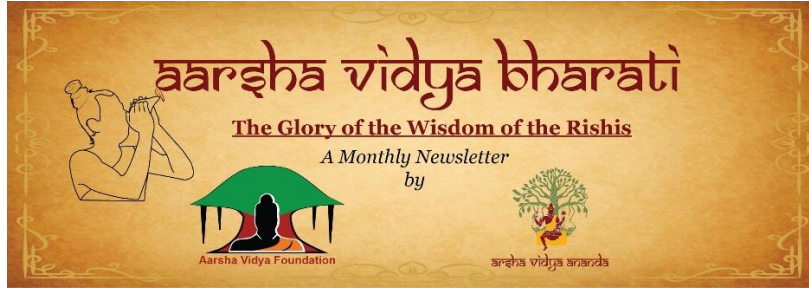

Aarsha Vidya Bharati - May 2022

Vaisakha - Jyestha 2079

A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom

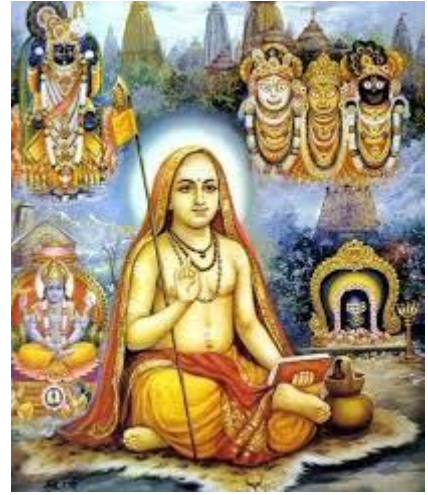


This is one of many articles from our monthly newsletter. Access the [May 2022 issue](#) or read any of [the articles](#).

Living Our Traditions - Śaṅkara Jayanti

By Sundara Raghavan, Mumbai

That everything is Brahman and there is nothing other than Brahman is the teaching that traces back to the Lord. It is due to *Bhagavān Ādi Śaṅkara*, whose birth anniversary (*Pañcamī tithi* during *śukla pakṣa* of *Vaiśākha* month) is celebrated as *Śaṅkara Jayanti*, that we are learning this truth in our Vedanta classes today. In the famous invocation starting with "*Sadāśiva samārambhām ...*" which acknowledges the entire lineage starting from the Lord to our immediate teacher, *Śaṅkara's* name is placed in the middle even though there were many teachers before and after his time. Likewise, in the other invocation starting "*Nārāyaṇam Padmabhuvam ...*", we add a "*Śrī*" to his name alone. The major reason why *Śaṅkara* is taken as the shining link in the tradition of teaching is his rigorous intellectual clarity. He would maintain that rigour through the whole argument, keeping the brevity intact.



It is well known that *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara* wrote *bhāṣyam-s* (commentaries) on Bhagavad Gita, Ten Upanishads and Brahma Sutra which are collectively called as *Prasthāna trayam*. He also wrote several *prakaraṇa grantha-s* (introductory and advanced texts) such as *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, *Upadeśa sāhasrī*, *Laghu Vākyavṛitti* etc. Some scholars believe that a few texts that are attributed to *Ādi Śaṅkara* were written by later teachers who were also named *Śaṅkarācārya*. He contributed to the Stotra literature also having authored several hymns.



Apart from writing so many texts, he also established the *Ṣaṅmata* system of worshipping Shiva, Vishnu, Shakti, Ganesha, Subrahmanya and Surya. We also know about his setting up four monasteries to sustain Vedanta tradition.

As students of Vedanta, perhaps the unique matter of interest for us would be His greatness which shines through his *Bhāṣya-s* (commentaries) where he handles the language in a simple yet profound manner (or perhaps

‘simple and hence profound’). Every topic is handled, one by one, in a binary manner – with a *Pūrvapakṣa* (objection) and *Siddhānta* (Explanation), establishing clarity all the way. He dealt with all the contemporary issues of his time. In that process, he gave the tools to deal with all contemporary issues that would arise in the future also.

In all his *bhāṣya*-s, *Śaṅkara* raises all the objections on behalf of the people holding opposite views. He articulates all the objections very objectively and clearly in such a manner that even the *Pūrvapakṣin*-s may agree that he has indeed articulated their objections even better than them. Having presented the *Pūrvapakṣa*-s as though they are invincible, he would dismiss them as easily as a knife would cut through butter – sometimes with an elaborate explanation and often by pointing out a fundamental logical fallacy in the objection. For every *Vedāntin*, who is naturally inclined to logical thinking, reading *Śaṅkara Bhāṣyam* is very enriching.

In the words of Pujya Swamiji, *Śaṅkara* could have easily established a cult since he had demolished all opposing views. But he did not do so because, having known that Brahman alone is Satyam, he knew fully well that nothing else such as establishing a cult with a large follower base or according the cult members a superior status, can be better than Brahman.

Many great philosophers and saints have walked this land after *Śaṅkara*'s time. But none could add to or modify what *Śaṅkara* had taught. That is because *Bhagavān Ādi Śaṅkara* has taught the truth of that which is everything (“*Brahma Satyam, Jagat Mithyā*” as he condensed the teaching of a crore texts into half a verse). How can anyone add anything to or modify Brahman?

[Please click here to join the Shankara Jayanti Celebration on zoom.](#)

7-8:30 pm IST; 6th May Friday 2022; Passcode: om

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Celebrating Adi Shankaracharya Jayanti

7 - 8.30 pm IST
6th May, Friday, 2022

Puja and talks by Swami Brahavidananda
and Swamini Brahma Prajnananda

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